

REPTILIA: SQUAMATA: SERPENTES: COLUBRIDAE DRYMOBIUS MARGARITIFERUS

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

WILSON, LARRY DAVID. 1974. *Drymobius margaritiferus*.

***Drymobius margaritiferus* (Schlegel)
Central American Speckled Racer**

Herpetodryas margaritiferus Schlegel, 1837:184. Type-locality, "New Orleans" (in error); restricted to Veracruz, Mexico Smith, 1942); further restricted to Córdoba, Veracruz, Mexico (Smith and Taylor, 1950). Holotype unknown.

Leptophis margaritiferus: Duméril and Bibron, 1854:539.

Zamenis tricolor Hallowell, 1855:34. Type-locality, "Honduras." Holotype, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia 5511, adult male, collector and date of collection unknown (not examined by author).

Dromicus margaritiferus: Günther, 1858:126.

Drymobius margaritiferus: Cope, 1860:561.

Thamnosophis margaritiferus: Jan, 1863:82.

• CONTENT. Four subspecies are recognized: *fistulosus*, *maydis*, *margaritiferus*, and *occidentalis*.

• DEFINITION. A species of *Drymobius* with a reticulate dorsal pattern, each scale dark with a pale center; some populations retain the juvenile pattern of dark diffuse dorsal blotches or bands superimposed on the reticulate pattern.

• DESCRIPTIONS. The most recent reviewer, Smith (1942), recognized three subspecies. Villa (1968) described an insular subspecies. Additional descriptions of the various subspecies are available in: Stuart (1934, 1943, 1948, 1954), Gaige (1936), Andrews (1937), Dunkle and Smith (1937), Gaige, Hartweg, and Stuart (1937), Oliver (1937), Smith (1938, 1943), Hartweg and Oliver (1940), Schmidt (1941), Schmidt and Davis (1941), Smith and Laufe (1945), Schmidt and Shannon (1947), Taylor (1949, 1951, 1954), Mertens (1952), Rand (1957), Wright and Wright (1957), Conant (1975), Davis and Dixon (1959), and Hardy and McDiarmid (1969). Stuart (1932) described hemipenial morphology.

• ILLUSTRATIONS. Conant (1975) provided a color illustration of *D. m. margaritiferus*. Villa (1968) illustrated the head and dorsal pattern of *D. m. maydis*.

• DISTRIBUTION. *Drymobius margaritiferus* occurs at low and moderate elevations from southern Texas on the Atlantic versant and southern Sonora, México (exact locality not indicated by Bogert and Oliver, 1945; specimen upon which record is based is Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Univ. California 29830 from Guiracoba) on the Pacific, generally avoiding the Meseta Central, throughout Central America, and into South America along the Caribbean coast of Colombia. *D. margaritiferus* occurs in a wide variety of vegetation types ranging from lowland tropical rain forest, pine savannas, and thorn forest at lower elevations to pine woods and cloud forest at higher elevations.

• FOSSIL RECORD. Langebartel (1953) tentatively referred some trunk vertebrae of early post-Pleistocene age from a cave at Actun Spukil, Yucatán, México to this species.

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. The most recent taxonomic work on this species is that of Smith (1942) and Villa (1968). Information on other aspects of the biology of this species is limited. Food habits are discussed in Stuart (1935), Smith (1943), Duellman (1961, 1963), and Meyer (1966). Aspects of reproduction are treated in Stuart (1935, 1943, 1948), Neill (1965), and Hardy and McDiarmid (1969). Habitat and/or activity period are discussed in Stuart (1935, 1943, 1948, 1950, 1958), Peters (1954), Rand (1957), Duellman (1958, 1961, 1963, 1965), Martin (1958), Hardy and McDiarmid (1969), McCoy (1970), Dixon, Ketchersid, and Lieb (1972), and Wilson and Meyer (ms. in preparation on the snakes of Honduras).

• ETYMOLOGY. The name *margaritiferus* is derived from the Latin *margarita*, meaning "pearl," and the Latin *ferre*, meaning "to bear," in presumed reference to the allusion that the dorsum of this snake is "strewn with pearls." The name *fistulosus* is derived from Latin and means "a pipe or duct" or more figuratively "full of holes," in reference to the overall appearance of the snake with its pattern of pale spots on a darker ground color; *maydis* is derived from the Latin *mays*, meaning

"corn," in reference to the Corn Islands; *occidentalis* is derived from the Latin *occidens*, meaning "towards the west," in allusion to the distribution of the subspecies along the western coast of Central America.

1. *Drymobius margaritiferus margaritiferus* (Schlegel)

Herpetodryas margaritiferus Schlegel, 1837:184. See species account.

Drymobius margaritiferus margaritiferus: Bocourt, 1890:716.

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with the subcaudals black-edged posteriorly, a distinct dark temporal stripe, and the posterior edge of each middorsal scale black, the anterior edge blue and the middle yellow to pale orange.

2. *Drymobius margaritiferus fistulosus* Smith

Drymobius margaritiferus fistulosus Smith, 1942:383. Type-locality, "Mirimar, Nayarit," Mexico. Holotype, U. S. Natl. Mus. 51480, female, collected by J. C. Thompson in 1913 (not examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with the subcaudals usually black-edged posteriorly, a distinct dark temporal stripe, and the entire border of each middorsal scale black, a small central area blue or yellow.

3. *Drymobius margaritiferus maydis* Villa

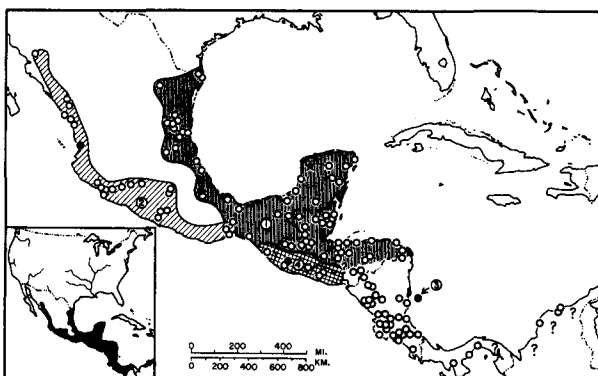
Drymobius margaritiferus maydis Villa, 1968:117. Type-locality, "Nicaragua: Departamento de Zelaya; Great Corn Island." Holotype, University of Costa Rica 999, adult male, collected by J. D. Villa, J. A. Roze, and R. G. Zweifel, January 1966 (not examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with the juvenile pattern retained in adults, consisting of about 35 to 45 dark diffuse dorsal blotches or bands, 2 to 3 scales long, extending laterally to the ventrals. The anterior edges of the middorsal scales are blue or gray; the posterior edges are black. The subcaudals are black-edged posteriorly.

4. *Drymobius margaritiferus occidentalis* Bocourt

Drymobius margaritiferus occidentalis Bocourt, 1890:718. Type-locality, "western [southern] versant of Guatemala near Volcán Atitlán." Syntypes, Mus. Natl. Hist. Nat. Paris 7395 and 91-262, collector unknown, collected in 1866 (not examined by author).

• DEFINITION. A subspecies with the subcaudal surface white, unmarked, no distinct dark temporal stripe, and the central spots of the dorsal scales grayish-brown, diffuse, and stippled,



MAP. Solid symbols mark type-localities, open circles other localities. Subspecific status of mainland populations south of El Salvador and Honduras is not resolved (see COMMENT). The star marks a fossil record.

this color grading into the black coloration of the tips of these scales.

COMMENT

Material of *Drymobius margaritiferus* from Central and South America has never been critically examined with regard to how well it corresponds to Smith's (1942) arrangement, which was admittedly established largely on the basis of Mexican specimens. My study of material from Honduras demonstrates the presence of specimens similar to *D. m. margaritiferus* on the Atlantic versant but leaves unresolved whether influence of *D. m. occidentalis* extends beyond El Salvador along the Pacific versant.

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